United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Proposals to establish United Nations Operation in Mozambique and to appoint Special Representative to help parties set up machinery to ensure implementation of 4 October Peace Agreement put forward by Secretary-General; Security Council meeting scheduled for tomorrow on Secretary-General's report.

+ Secretary-General, in statement marking Anti-Apartheid Committee's Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners, urges those in position of leadership to redouble efforts to end apartheid and join in creation of new future for South Africa; South Africa contends Committee's decision to observe Day "has lost what relevance it may once have had".

+ In Geneva, head of United Nations Humanitarian Affairs and Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia preside over donor's conference; proposals for creation of "trust fund" for peace activities and national reconciliation conference presented.

+ General Assembly begins first day of discussions on conclusion of United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons; expected to adopt draft tomorrow.

+ Chairman of First Committee says bilateral arms reduction agreements have merits but are not the ideal means for making progress in disarmament field; Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs urges close attention to items relating to regionally-based disarmament.

+ United Nations owed some 1.2 billion by Member States for both regular budget and peace-keeping operations; Secretary-General reiterates proposals to alleviate financial crisis.

+ Security Council's Ad Hoc Commission on situation in Angola departs for Luanda.

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For information media—not an official record

+ Security Council welcomes efforts by Secretary-General to resolve problems impeding implementation of settlement plan in Western Sahara and intention to explore possibility of further meeting of tribal chiefs.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to appoint a Special Representative for Mozambique who will travel to Maputo, as soon as appointed, in order to help the parties in that country to set up the joint machinery to ensure the implementation of the General Peace Agreement of 4 October. In the meantime, an interim Special Representative will be in overall charge of the United Nations activities in Mozambique.

In addition, based on the Special Representative's report, the Secretary-General will recommend to the Security Council the establishment of a United Nations Operation in Mozambique (UNOMO) to carry out functions envisaged for the United Nations in monitoring and assisting the implementation of the Peace Agreement. That Agreement was signed by President Joaquim Alberto Chissano of Mozambique and the leader of the Mozambique National Resistence Movement (RENAMO), Afonso Macacho Marceta Dhlakama, at the beginning of this month.

According to a report by the Secretary-General to the Security Council, dated 9 October, the Mozambican President has asked the United Nations to undertake a major role in monitoring the Agreement, including functions relating to the cease-fire, the elections -- scheduled for October 1993 -- and humanitarian assistance. With regard to the elections, the Organization has been asked to both monitor the electoral process and provide technical assistance. The United Nations has also been asked to provide chairpersons for the two Commissions which will be supervising the cease-fire and the reintegration of demobilized personnel.

Once appointed, the Special Representative will be supported by a team of up to 25 military observers and necessary administrative support staff, who will be sent to Mozambique in the coming days. The Representative will be asked to report back to Headquarters at the earliest possible date and the Secretary-General will base his recommendations to the Council on that report for the deployment of UNOMO.

The Security Council held consultations today with a view to a formal meeting on the report of the Secretary-General on Mozambique.

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In his statement marking today's observance of the Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners by the Special Committee against Apartheid, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali urged those in positions of leadership to "redouble their efforts to end the agony which apartheid has produced and to join in creating a new future for South Africa".

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The struggle of political prisoners had not been in vain, he said, adding that the ideology of apartheid had been defeated and its evils recognized. He welcomed the decision of the South African Government to release those held in prison on political grounds, but pointed out that although that Government had now accepted that apartheid was "discredited and unsustainable", the struggle was not over yet.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali also emphasized that eliminating the "blood brothers" of apartheid and violence was part of the same process. The United Nations was inspired by the suffering of those who had fought against apartheid and was determined to press ahead towards building a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa, he said, noting that that was also the aim of the Conference for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) process. Twenty-eight United Nations observers were now in South Africa, working in areas where political violence and confrontation was most severe, he said. However, he added, the responsibility for achieving a just and long-lasting agreement through negotiation must rest with the South Africans themselves.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali expressed hope that this would be the last meeting devoted to solidarity with South Africa's political prisoners. If the underlying reason for such meeting has not disappeared by 1993, the entire process of reconciliation would be open to question and the entire future of South Africa would be threatened, the Secretary-General said.

In a related development, South Africa today stated that the decision of the Special Committee Against Apartheid to observe the Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners was "an issue that had lost what relevance it may once have had", and urged the Committee to "desist from activities which suggested that it was failing to keep track of developments".

A press release today from the Permanent Mission of South Africa quoted a letter to the Secretary-General dated 8 October, contending that the Anti-Apartheid Committee had previously expressed satisfaction with the Government's prisoner release programme in its statement on 1 October.

Under a Record of Understanding reached on 26 September, the Government had demonstrated its willingness to bring about national reconciliation and a comprehensive political settlement in South Africa and had addressed "finally and comprehensively" the issue of political prisoners, the letter said. By its terms, the prisoner release process was expected to be completed before November 15, and any prisoners identified after that date shall be released, the letter said.

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Somalia was a country without central, regional or local administrations and without any public utility services, no electricity, no communications, no health services or schools -- a country in which "anarchy prevails" -- Mohammed Sahnoun, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia told today the first donor's conference devoted to Somalia in Geneva .

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In a review of the United Nations humanitarian assistance to Somalia, Mr. Sahnoun noted that "a whole year slipped by", as the Organization and the international community, apart from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and a few NGOs, "watched Somalia descend into this hell". While stating that "the damage will not be repaired", he noted that it should be incombent upon the United Nations to look back and seriously investigate the reasons for "failure to act promptly".

Security remained the major problem for the effective delivery of humanitarian supplies to the millions of starving Somalis, Mr. Sahnoun said. In addition to the 500 United Nations security personnel who had been deployed in Mogadishu, the faction leaders in the Northeast had signed an agreement for the deployment of another 750 United Nations troops to provide security at the port of Bossaso and to ensure the delivery of food and rehabilitation assistance to the whole of that region. Negotiations were currently under way with the political leaders in the so-called "Somaliland" for the deployment of security personnel at the port of Berbera and also with the leaders of the South for the same operation at the port of Kismayo. That port, Mr. Sahnoun noted, was important for the emergency relief in the South and should have had, with Mogadishu, the priority concern from the beginning.

With regard to the disarmament of the population and the demobilization of irregular forces, the Special Representative proposed the creation of a trust fund to encourage the formation and activities of organizations with a vested interest in peace, such as Elders Councils, youths movements and women's organizations. He also proposed the convening of a national reconciliation conference as soon as possible to facilitate the reconstruction and restoration of economic activity. Mr. Sahnoun expressed the hope that before the end of the year all the parties, movements and factions would participate in such a conference.

To accelerate vitally required relief efforts and pave the way for eventual recovery of the Somali society, the United Nations and NGOs have agreed to take immediate action with the 100-Day Action Programme for Accelerated Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia. The plan includes massive infusion of food aid; provision of basic health services and a mass measles immunization campaign; urgent provision of clean water, sanitation and hygene; simultaneous delivery of seeds, tools and animal vaccines with food rations; and prevention of further refugee outflows and promotion of returnee programmes.

The Conference in Geneva was presided over by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Eliasson, and Mr. Sahnoun.

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The General Assembly began today the first day of discussions of the conclusion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The Assembly had before it the Secretary-General's report and a draft text which it is expected to adopt tomorrow.

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On Friday, 9 October, the Assembly took up the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" during its debate on the work of the Organization. Delegates expressed support for the creation of a peace-keeping reserve fund of $50 million, a $50 million humanitarian fund, and a peace endowment fund to meet the increasing financial requirements for major peace-keeping operations.

The representative of the United States, Alexander Watson, said that while his Government supported the creation of the reserve fund, it could not accept the Secretary-General's proposal that the Assembly appropriate one third of the estimated costs of a peace-keeping mission as soon as the Security Council decided to establish an operation.

Operating on a rotating basis, the reserve fund could help absorb the steep initial costs of starting a peace-keeping operation, he said, and would then be replenished from the inflow of Member State assessments for that operation. The United States might consider the idea of accelerated appropriations on a case-by-case basis when the reserve account was not adequate to meet needs, he said.

Several speakers in Friday's debate called for the establishment of a working group to study the "Agenda for Peace" proposals which include the increased use of fact-finding missions, preventive deployment of troops and increased reliance on peace-making measures and post-conflict peace-building.

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Although bilateral arms reduction agreements had their merits, they were at present not the ideal means by which to make progress in the disarmament field, Nabil Elaraby (Egypt), Chairman of the General Assembly's First Committee (Political and Security) told delegates this morning, as the Committee began its substantive debate on various disarmament and international security issues.

Nuclear weapons threatened all States, he said, stressing that all members of the international community must participate, on an equal footing, in establishing the required mechanisms for the elimination of such weapons. It should be a global endeavour which guaranteed a fair balance between rights and obligations without any double standards in the implementation process, he said.

The United Nations could play a role, particularly in ensuring the universality of disarmament agreements, Mr. Elaraby said, urging a multilateral dialogue aimed at strengthening mutual confidence and collaboration among all nations as a necessary step in laying the foundations of peace. The regional approach to disarmament was also important, he said, as it would take specific characteristics of each region into consideration, thus making such agreements more effective.

This morning, the Committee also heard from Vladimir Petrovsky, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, who observed that if the

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Committee came to an agreement on its next steps in connection with the draft chemical weapons convention and the Register of Conventional Arms, it would be a major leap forward in furthering the cause of arms control and disarmament. He also urged close attention to items relating to regionally-based disarmament and confidence-building measures as means to preventive diplomacy.

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The United Nations is currently owed some $1.2 billion for both the regular budget and peace-keeping operations, according to the latest report by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the Organization's financial situation. Describing the outlook as "bleak", the Secretary-General stressed that at least $400 million must be collected between now and the end of the year. "Otherwise, the regular budget and all of the peace-keeping operations will run out of money simultaneously", he said, urging Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time.

The persistent difficulties of the United Nations were becoming "politically incongruous and increasingly damaging to the implementation of mandated programmes", the report warned, pointing to the fact that financial problems absorbed an amount of time and energy that would be better used to address the intellectual and ethical issues that confront the Organization.

The largest debtors are the United States with a total of some $295 million in outstanding contributions - following the two payments made by that country on Friday, 9 October, totalling $229 million - followed by the Russian Federation with $138 million, South Africa with $49 million and Brazil with $33 million.

In his report, the Secretary-General reiterated his proposals to charge interests on the amounts that are not paid on time; to be allowed to borrow commercially; and to impose a levy on arms sales and international air travel, among other things.

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The Ad Hoc Commission established by the Security Council to support the Angola Peace Agreement left New York for Luanda on Friday, 9 October. It met yesterday with UNITA leader Mr. Savimbi, and this morning with President Dos Samtos.

The Commission is composed of four Security Council members, José Luis Jesus of Cape Verde; Ahmed Snoussi of Morocco; Valentin V. Lozinskiy of the Russian Federation, and Edward J. Perkins of the United States.

The Council established the Commission last week concerned at reports that one of the parties to the Agreements was contesting the validity of the recent elections in Angola. In a statement on behalf of Council members, Council President Jean-Bernard Merimée (France) called upon all the parties "to respect the obligations they had assumed within the framework of the Peace Agreements, and in particular the obligation to respect the final election

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results". Any challenge to the results, the statement added, "must be settled through the mechanisms established for that purpose".

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The Security Council has welcomed the efforts by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and his Special Representative to resolve the problems impeding the implementation of the settlement plan in Western Sahara, in particular the intention to explore with the parties the possibility of a further meeting of tribal chiefs.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 8 October, the President of the Council emphasized the urgency of the pending questions being settled, in particular the "interpretation of the criteria for inclusion in the voters' lists", so that the implementation of the plan might begin as soon as possible.

The members of the Council also stressed their approval for the Secretary-General's proposal to maintain the existing deployment and staffing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

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